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They Have It Better There

Chinese Immigrant Teachers' Beliefs, Imaginaries and Ideologies in Cross-National Comparisons © Higher Education Press and Springer-Verlag GmbH Germany 2019 Abstract This paper was written in response to a growing need to address the perceptions and experiences of immigrant teachers. Based on a critical intercultural theoretical perspective, which moves beyond typical "culture shock" and "adaptation" models of understanding and explaining immigrants' experiences, this paper makes use of the concepts of teacher beliefs, ideologies and imaginaries (Holliday, 2010) in considering how Finland-based Chinese immigrant teachers perceive the position of being teachers of Chinese in Finland and Australia. An analysis of data from group discussions during a teacher training workshop indicates that these teachers constructed a "utopia" (Australia) and "dystopia" (Finland) of Chinese language teaching, and reveals that multiple factors have influenced these immigrant teachers' perceptions and experiences. Findings provide information for teacher educators and stakeholders to better understand and support immigrant teachers from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Front. Educ. China 2019, 14(3): 453–479 https://doi.org/10.1007/s11516-019-0022-8 Haiqin LIU (*), Fred DERVIN Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Helsinki, Helsinki 00014, Finland E-mail: liu.haiqin@helsinki.fi Huiling XU Faculty of Arts, Macquarie University, Sydney 2109, Australia Robyn MOLONEY Department of Educational Studies, Macquarie University, Sydney 2109, Australia RESEARCH ARTICLE Haiqin LIU, Fred DERVIN, Huiling XU, Robyn MOLONEY "They Have It Better There": Chinese Immigrant Teachers' Beliefs, Imaginaries and Ideologies in Cross-National Comparisons © Higher Education Press and Springer-Verlag GmbH Germany 2019 Abstract This paper was written in response to a growing need to address the perceptions and experiences of immigrant teachers. Based on a critical intercultural theoretical perspective, which moves beyond typical "culture shock" and "adaptation" models of understanding and explaining immigrants' experiences, this paper makes use of the concepts of teacher beliefs, ideologies and imaginaries (Holliday, 2010) in considering how Finland-based Chinese immigrant teachers perceive the position of being teachers of Chinese in Finland and Australia. An analysis of data from group discussions during a teacher training workshop indicates that these teachers constructed a "utopia" (Australia) and "dystopia" (Finland) of Chinese language teaching, and reveals that multiple factors have influenced these immigrant teachers' perceptions and experiences. Findings provide information for teacher educators and stakeholders to better understand and support immigrant teachers from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. 454 Haiqin LIU, Fred DERVIN, Huiling XU, Robyn MOLONEY Keywords Chinese immigrant teachers, professional development, discourses, teachers' beliefs, ideologies, imaginaries Introduction Like most parts of the world, the Nordics have experienced major societal changes over the past decades. One of the issues raised by researchers is the need to diversify the teaching force in Nordic schools so that it better reflects the increasingly diverse school population (Dewilde & Kulbrandstad, 2014; Ragnarsdóttir, 2010). In Finland, one of the most "celebrated" Nordic countries around the world for well-being, happiness, and top education, schools have become increasingly more multicultural over the past 20 years. Researchers and policy makers have thus discussed the need to develop teachers' intercultural sensitivity to better support the personal and academic growth of culturally diverse students (Jokikokko, 2005). Recruiting more teachers of diverse backgrounds (Hahl & Paavola, 2015) was considered one of the solutions (Lefever et al., 2014). There is thus an increasing number of immigrant teachers, most of whom are language teachers, working in all education sectors in Finland (Lefever et al., 2014; Skhiri, 2016). However, the experiences and perceptions of these teachers working in Finland have not yet been among the topics of full-scale academic research (Stikhin & Rynkänen, 2017). In this article, we address the perceptions and experiences of immigrant teachers in the Nordic country of Finland. There are many terms to refer to teachers of immigrant background (Virta, 2015; Walsh, Brigham, & Wang, 2011). In this paper,

we examine the case of Chinese immigrant teachers, i.e., teachers who were born and educated in China and who are working as teachers of the Chinese language in Finland. Our data derives from a Professional Development (PD) training session held at a Finnish university, during which a group of Chinese immigrant teachers viewed and responded to a prerecorded discussion among four Australia-based Chinese teachers about their work. We investigate the cross-national comparative discourses of Chinese immigrant teachers by addressing the following research questions: "They Have It Better There" 455 (1) What discourses do Finland-based Chinese immigrant teachers construct about being teachers of the Chinese language in Australia and in Finland? (2) What are the factors contributing to their construction of these discourses? Research Context The Chinese language has become an increasingly important second/foreign language globally due to both "push" (i.e., the active promotion by the Confucius Institutes and the growing importance of politico-economic initiatives such as China's Belt and Road Initiative) and "pull" factors (i.e., the global understanding of China's economic growth and the opportunities that might be raised through learning Chinese) (Han, 2017). In the context of this study, Chinese is also seen as a valuable language and has attracted increasing attention over the past decade (Liu & Holmes, 2018). Chinese language teaching has been actively promoted in both Finnish schools and institutions of higher education (Liu & Dervin, 2016). However, accurate information about students and teachers of the Chinese language is scarce. It is estimated that there are between one and two thousand students and about 50 teachers of the Chinese language in Finland. Among them, around 10 arrived in Finland through the "Volunteer Chinese Teacher Programme" organized by Hanban (the Chinese abbreviation for the Office of Chinese Language Council International), while the rest consists of a small number of certified teachers educated in Finland (most of whom are Finnish nationals) and a larger number of uncertified, part-time teachers (most of whom are Chinese nationals). The Finland-based authors of this study have collaborated with the Confucius Institute at a Finnish university to provide Professional Development (PD) training to Chinese teachers based in the country. During previous training sessions, they often heard the teachers making comparisons between Finland and other countries (i.e., Australia, New Zealand, UK, USA, etc.) and perceiving these other countries as better places to be teachers of Chinese. This led to the idea of organizing a 456 Haiqin LIU, Fred DERVIN, Huiling XU, Robyn MOLONEY cross-national collaborative PD training workshop to provide an opportunity for Chinese teachers in Finland to hear colleagues in another country talking about their situation. This was organized so that the teachers in Finland could find out if their perceptions and beliefs were validated since these may negatively affect their self-confidence and teaching practice. Alternatively, if they were facing similar challenges and issues, they would feel that they were part of this "community of practice," facing similar challenges and looking for solutions. Since Australia had been mentioned many times in the Chinese teachers' conversations during previous trainings, we believed an opportunity to engage with what the Australia-based Chinese teachers said about their work would serve the aforementioned purposes. A group of four teachers of Chinese based in Australia, from a community school, a public school and two universities, were invited to talk about Chinese language education in their own context. They discussed topics such as the reasons behind the development of Chinese language education in Australia, the challenges and problems that schools, institutions and teachers of Chinese face and how intercultural Chinese language teaching is embedded in their context. The discussion was video-recorded and then used as a stimulus to trigger discussion and reflection in a PD training workshop for teachers of the Chinese language organized by the Confucius Institute at a Finnish university. The Finland-based authors were invited to conduct the training. We describe the training in more details in the Methodology section. Literature Review Research on Immigrant Teachers One of the features of today's globalization is the increasing internationalization of education. Today's educational settings are often characterized by the cultural diversity of both learners and teachers. There has been a strong academic interest in learners of diverse backgrounds, and interest in the experiences of immigrant teachers in the host environment is "They Have It Better There" 457 also beginning to emerge (Bense, 2016). A review of existing research on immigrant teachers (Niyubahwe, Mukamurera, & Jutras, 2013) shows that factors

contributing to immigrant teachers' experiences of and integration in their host working environment include: the quality of the reception and collaboration (Deters, 2006; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004; Myles, Cheng, & Wang, 2006; Remennick, 2002); support given by the administration and their colleagues; mentorship relationship (Peeler & Jane, 2005); and acceptance from the school community and the students' parents (Deters, 2006). Although we argue that the concept of integration is problematic (Schinkel, 2018) as it implies a power imbalance in which those being integrated are potentially seen as a problem, the review nevertheless gives some insights as to what challenges immigrant teachers in general might face. As mentioned above, the study is situated in Finland, a country that has been praised worldwide, sometimes in an exaggerated manner, as an education "utopia" (Itkonen, Dervin, & Talib, 2017), because of its excellent education system. Finnish teachers are reported to have enjoyed great respect nationally (Niemi, Lavonen, Kallioniemi, & Toom, 2018; Sahlberg, 2011). However, research shows that not all teachers working in Finland feel the same way. In their comparative study about immigrant teachers working in Finland and in Iceland, Lefever et al. (2014, p. 80) found that immigrant teachers in Finland encountered discrimination due to their nationality, language background, and skin colour. Moreover, their diverse backgrounds were considered to be disadvantages rather than resources. Virta's (2015) study on native-language support teachers (who are all immigrants in Finland) also reveals that the teachers felt marginalized and suffered from their unclear position and short-term work contracts. A previous study (Liu & Dervin, 2016) on Chinese immigrant teachers working in Finland demonstrated that these teachers experienced a lack of job security and a sense of inferiority in Finnish society. As a consequence, for these teachers, Finland could be considered a dystopia, that is, a place which is not favourable to Chinese language education and to immigrant teachers of Chinese. Research on Chinese Immigrant Teachers 458 Haiqin LIU, Fred DERVIN, Huiling XU, Robyn MOLONEY Unlike the literature on immigrant teachers in general, studies on Chinese immigrant teachers working in the Western context often take a large culture approach (Holliday, 1999), attributing the main challenges these teachers face, not to the lack of support and hospitality they receive, but to the cultural differences between their original place and the host environment. They are said to have experienced conflicts between the educational culture in their new teaching environment and their pedagogical practices and beliefs (Moloney, 2013; Moloney & Xu, 2015; Xu & Moloney, 2015; Zhang & Li, 2010) which are said to be deeply rooted in Chinese educational culture/schema (Hu, 2002). However, studies that take alternative approaches than a large culture approach are emerging. Findings from these studies indicate that there are many factors that contribute to the formation of Chinese teachers' beliefs, and these beliefs can change and/or be changed in different scenarios, as well as across time (Moloney & Xu, 2015; Wang, 2015; Wang & Du 2014). Wang and Du (2016) point out that a recurring feature of this literature on immigrant Chinese teachers working abroad is the tendency to adopt comparative approaches whereby teachers from China and teachers from Western countries are characterized by traditional Chinese education culture and Western education culture, respectively. These Chinese teachers are said to adopt the traditional Chinese culture of teaching which strongly emphasizes passive intake and rote memorization while interactive or creative types of classroom behaviour are not encouraged. The traditional Chinese education culture is often used to explain the teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practices and is regarded as a main cause of undesired learning outcomes. We argue that essentialist views of culture (Holliday, 2011) are not conducive, and that they are misleading for two reasons. Firstly, they hide people behind cultures and, at the same time, reduce them to being the representatives of a singular (national) culture and a solid identity (Dervin, 2015; Ni, 2013). Secondly, they seem to have assumed a linear relationship between beliefs and behaviours, ignoring the role of contextual factors besides beliefs in behaviour prediction (Tamimy, 2015). "They Have It Better There" 459 Theorectical Framework This study is located within the critical interculturality paradigm (Dervin, 2016; Piller, 2010), which represents an important shift from the "all cultural" used in the explanation of immigrants' experiences and perceptions. We take a critical and reflective perspective (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006; Dervin, 2015; Holliday, 2010; Jackson, 2011) to examine Chinese immigrant

teachers' discourses, taking into account the power imbalances and inequalities that they experience as immigrants (Shi, 2001), and problematize three central aspects of the discourses they construct: beliefs, ideologies and imaginaries. We define these elements in what follows. Discourses are understood here as the teachers' representation of reality, their ways of being in the world. "They are forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes" (Gee, 1989, pp. 6–7). The teachers' discourses mirror their thoughts, feelings, and needs in a specific context and for particular purposes, and reveal how they see and relate to the world surrounding them. We aim to identify the teachers' beliefs, ideologies and imaginaries reflected in their constructed discourses, and the power relations hidden behind their potential cultural claims (Breidenbach & Nyíri, 2009). A belief is defined by Borg (2001, p. 186) as "a consciously or unconsciously held proposition." A belief "is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and behaviour." Borg's definition seems to suggest that there is a clear linear relation between teachers' beliefs and their behaviours. However, we agree with Poulson, Avramidis, Fox, Medwell, and Wary (2001) that the relationship between beliefs and behaviours is more complex and dialectical, and that contexts play an important role (Tamimy, 2015). Some researchers (e.g., Pratt, Kelly, & Wong, 1999; Watkins & Biggs, 2001) claim that the Chinese cultural contexts from which Chinese teachers are frame their early perceptions of professional identity. From a critical intercultural perspective, we argue that, firstly, it is hard to define what is meant by the Chinese cultural context as 460 Haiqin LIU, Fred DERVIN, Huiling XU, Robyn MOLONEY China is a vast country with a long history, diverse cultural traditions, values and beliefs. Secondly, identities are unstable, contextual and have to be negotiated with others. People might not only enact different identities depending on the contexts and their interlocutors, but also on their personal conditions such as health and mood (Dervin, 2016). Therefore, we consider that teachers' beliefs are complex, and that these different beliefs are not separate entities but that they interplay dynamically and constantly (Ernest, 1989). As far as ideology is concerned, here it refers to socio-politically accepted and taken-for-granted ways of thinking, for example, about language and diversity (Shi, 2001). Holliday (2010, p. 39) reminds us that: "the descriptions of culture are themselves ideological, and the … claim to scientific neutrality and objectivity comprise a naive denial of ideology." Ideologies involve evaluations (van Dijk, 2005). Thus, discourses on culture, differences and identity can easily serve the purpose of evaluation rather than describing 'neutrally' the Other. A previous study on the ideologies of the Chinese language in both Finnish media reports and policy documents reveals that the Chinese language is often discussed in relation to its symbolic capital along with the economic allure of China (Liu & Holmes, 2018). When teachers engage in language practices such as constructing discourses on Chinese language education, they are simultaneously displaying their ideologies about the nature, function, and purpose of learning the Chinese language, how the language should be taught, and what the characteristics of good learners, and what a good teaching and learning environment look like. We are interested in whether and how the ideologies manifested in the teachers' constructed discourses are intertwined with the circulating ideological discourses of Chinese language in Finnish society. Anthropologist Salazar defines imaginaries as "socially shared and transmitted (both within and between cultures) representational assemblages that inter-act with people's personal imaginings and are used as meaning-making and world-shaping devices" (2012, p. 576). Imaginaries are thus constructed, expressed and negotiated between self and other. For Lacan, imaginaries represent fantasies people create in response to their psychological needs (Jaques-Alain, 1977). For Holliday, "the imagining of self and other results in the substantive "They Have It Better There" 461 cultural product in the form of statements about culture" (2012, p. 45). Therefore, statements made by the teachers about Chinese language education in Australia do not necessarily reflect the reality but can be a product of their imagination, influenced by many and varied voices (the media, discussions with other migrants, political discourses, etc.). In what follows we use the identified beliefs, ideologies and imaginaries of our participants to examine how they perceive and construct Finnish and Australian education. Methodology Participants The Finland-based authors were

invited to conduct the training during a PD training workshop organized by the Confucius Institute at a Finnish university. Before the workshop, invitations were sent to all the Chinese language teachers based in Finland. 18 teachers of Chinese participated in the workshop. Even though the PD was meant for all the teachers of Chinese in Finland, only Chinese immigrant teachers participated. One of the teachers commented that "maybe it is because the training is organized by the Confucius Institute, and the Finnish teachers do not want to have anything to do with it, or they don't think they need the training. They just normally don't participate." We were not sure about the reasons why Finnish teachers of Chinese did not participate, but this does give an impression that the Chinese immigrant teachers and the Finnish Chinese teachers are intentionally or unintentionally separated into two different communities of practice in this very scenario. Among the participants, eight were volunteer teachers from Hanban, and the rest were part-time teachers working in schools or educational organizations. At the beginning of the workshop, the Finland-based authors explained the purpose of this study, obtained consent from all the teachers to record the session and use the recordings as data for this study. In order to preserve the anonymity of the participants, we use T1, T2, T3, etc. to refer to the teachers in the Findings section. It is important to note here that none of these teachers had worked in Australia. As we 462 Haiqin LIU, Fred DERVIN, Huiling XU, Robyn MOLONEY used a discursive approach which relies on respondents' beliefs, ideologies and imaginaries (see below) this did not prevent us from collecting rich data about the constructed reality of the Australian situation in the video they were to respond to. Procedures The workshop was organized in two sections. In the morning section, the main task was for the Finland-based Chinese teachers to view and respond to the video. Before viewing the video, the participating teachers were divided randomly into groups of four to six and asked to discuss what the similarities and differences of Chinese language education between Australia and Finland could be. As Australia had been mentioned on many occasions during previous trainings, the discussions were organized so that they could have a chance to share not only their beliefs but also their imaginaries about being a teacher of Chinese in a country where Chinese language education had a longer history and was on a larger scale. After viewing the video, they were then asked to reflect on and share in the same groups what they had discussed before viewing the video, and what they had learned from the video. During the lunch break, the Finland-based authors discussed and prepared to give comments about the group discussions happened in the morning. In the afternoon, one of the Finland-based authors gave a plenary talk entitled "Diversity in Chinese Language Education: Concepts and Methods." The focus of the talk was to comment on the participant teachers' group discussions, and discuss their perceptions of their situation, challenges and potential solutions, along with the possibility of embedding intercultural Chinese language teaching in Finnish schools. Both during and after the talk, the participants responded actively making comments and asking questions. The whole day PD training session was audio recorded. All the group discussions were in Chinese Mandarin, the plenary talk was in English, and the interaction between the teachers and the researchers was in both Chinese and English. The recordings were then transcribed, and the group discussions and interactions in Chinese were translated into "They Have It Better There" 463 English by the Chinese-English bilingual researchers. Data Analysis In this study, a discursive pragmatic approach, i.e., an interdisciplinary and intertheoretical discourse analysis approach proposed by Zienkowski (2011), was applied to examine the beliefs, ideologies and imaginaries that composed the Finland-based Chinese immigrant teachers' discourses. The use of a discursive pragmatics approach allows the researchers to "investigate empirical data of language-related actions and processes without losing sight of the various contextual layers that play a role in these actions and processes" (Zienkowski, 2011, p. 7). A discursive pragmatic approach means analyzing text in terms of both enunciation and dialogism. Enunciation deals with utterance level meaning from the perspective of different linguistic elements (Johansson & Suomela-Salmi, 2011, p. 71). That is, the focus is on (1) how the speaker constructs her/his discourse, and (2) how she/he negotiates the discourse with others (Dervin & Layne, 2013). Analysing linguistic elements such as deictics (markers of person, time, and space such as personal pronouns, adverbs, and verbs), modalities [e.g., must, should… "small" words that modify the

(inter-)subjective characteristic of an utterance], and nouns in the data helped us to show how the speakers co-construct specific discourses and reveal the sentiments they attach to the images of the construct (Dervin, 2008; Dervin & Layne, 2013). In an enunciation analysis, the speaker is considered as a heterogeneous subject that positions herself/himself in interaction with others and uses and manages various discursive and pragmatic strategies to construct self, other, surroundings, experiences, and so on. Dialogism, the second perspective used within a discursive pragmatics analysis of the data, is derived from M. Bakhtin's work (Brandist, 2002), which highlights the many and varied (often contradictory) voices that cross a given discourse (Bakhtin, 1981). From a dialogical perspective, language is fundamentally polysemic and its meaning is not predetermined by the linguistic code but constructed within a given discursive situation 464 Haiqin LIU, Fred DERVIN, Huiling XU, Robyn MOLONEY (Grossen, 2010, p. 7). We believe that this discursive pragmatic approach, taking into account both the enunciative and dialogical elements, allows us to identify different "voices" inserted by our research participants in the discourses and thus to highlight some of the ideologies, hierarchies, and power relations ingrained in the discourses (Dervin, 2011). In analyzing the Finland-based Chinese immigrant teachers' comparative discourses, we attempt to unearth some of the complexities of the immigrant teachers' perceptions interculturally, through confronting the teachers with teachers located in another context. We also pay special attention to the multiple voices within their utterances, and to whether there are any internal contradictions and inconsistencies. In the following section, we present how a "utopia" and a "dystopia" for Chinese language education are constructed by means of beliefs, ideologies and imaginaries of the Finland-based Chinese immigrant teachers. As our approach is discursive, our goal is not to say if Australia and/or Finland is better for Chinese language education, but to examine how Chinese immigrants represent their beliefs, ideologies and imaginaries about these two contexts. As such, statements about Australian/Finnish students and educators should be taken as illustrations of these phenomena but not at face value. Findings Our analysis of the Finland-based Chinese immigrant teachers' discourses reveals that they had negative views towards Finland (dystopia) and tended to construct Australia as a better place for Chinese language education and to be Chinese teachers (utopia)—although none of the respondents had worked in or even visited Australia. The construction of these discourses was based on what they had heard from the media, their family and friends, but also their imaginaries. The analysis of the Finland-based teachers' later discussion and interaction with the researchers showed that viewing the video, in which Australian colleagues talked about their own situation, did lead them to reflect on their own experiences in Finland. However, "They Have It Better There" 465 many teachers seemed to have ignored some of the information they heard in the video, holding onto what they believed to be true about the two contexts. Even though it was made clear that the task after viewing the video was to comment on what they heard about the situation in Australia and revisit what they had said before viewing the video (their beliefs, imaginaries and ideologies), the teachers seemed to focus mainly on "our problems," taking the discussion task as an opportunity to voice their concerns, needs and hopes. Constructing Australia as a Utopia to Be Teachers of Chinese Before viewing the video, the Finland-based teachers tended to construct Australia as a better place for Chinese language education than Finland in various ways, such as learners' characteristics and motivation, the learning environment, and its strong bilateral relationship with China. Although the teachers were asked to discuss the similarities and differences between the two contexts, many of their discussions focused on the differences—a typical bias when comparing two international educational contexts (Radhakrishnan, 2013). This reflects not only their beliefs but also imaginaries that the two situations share very few similarities but many differences. As we shall see from our data analysis below, these differences form the basis of their beliefs that Australia is a better place for Chinese language education and hence a better environment to be teachers of Chinese. Australia Has Better Learners The learners' characteristics were much discussed by Chinese immigrant teachers in Finland. In their discussion, the teachers tended to use othering and stereotypical discourses for both Australian and Finnish students (Dervin, 2016; Piller, 2010). The stereotypes that learners in Australia are active and that learners in Finland are shy and introverted were

shared by many teachers. This led them to discuss the possibility or impossibility of applying some of the pedagogy they could use and/or had heard of. 466 Haiqin LIU, Fred DERVIN, Huiling XU, Robyn MOLONEY Excerpt 1 We discussed three main differences. The first one is … obviously the activeness of students in the classroom. We are expecting to hear that students in Chinese classrooms in Australia are definitely more active, if not far more active than the students in the Chinese classrooms in Finland. Just now we discussed a problem … that is … say … Finnish students, most of them … I can't say everyone, but most of them have this mentality: "I know the answer, but I won't say it unless the teachers ask me to." That is, "If you don't ask me, I won't open my mouth to talk." They are not very active. (T1) In this excerpt, the modal adverb definitely (肯定) shows that the teacher had strong beliefs about the characteristics of students in Australia and expected those beliefs to be confirmed by what she was going to hear in the video. Then, realizing that all Finnish students have a unified mentality (they are not very active) was an over-generalization, the teacher replaced "everyone," which is an extreme case formulation to legitimize her claim (Pomerantz, 1986), with "most of them," and employed an imagined Finnish student's voice (direct voice representation in "I know the answer…") to reinforce her perception of Finnish students as being passive. The use of such direct voices serves the purpose of strengthening the authority of the claim being made. Excerpt 2 Compared with the Finnish students … we guess the Australian students are more outgoing, in a way, than the students here. But, Finnish students, they are quite shy, sometimes. They do not express their view or their ideas. So we face challenges in this respect. If we simply use the skills and methods for elementary level students to teach them, sometimes it can be quite embarrassing, [because] the students are not very active. So we must find better skills and methods for higher level students, especially my students who are doing research on Chinese language. How can we attract the students and interact with them? (T2, authors' emphasis) "They Have It Better There" 467 The second excerpt repeats the previous teachers' beliefs about the characteristics of learners in Finland and in Australia. In this excerpt, Finnish students are constructed as shy and passive, while Australian students are imagined to be outgoing. The Finnish learners' characteristics are regarded as a challenge to Chinese teachers. However, the problem (the students' passivity) seemed to be caused by a mismatch of teaching methods and learners' proficiency (using skills and methods for elementary level students to teach higher level students), yet here, the learners' characteristics seem to take the entire blame. From an enunciative perspective (Johansson & Suomela-Salmi, 2011), it is interesting to note that the teacher oscillated between using modalities to tone down her assertions ("sometimes"), to assertions that appeared to be self-assured (use of simple present). Finally, the teacher hid behind the pronoun "we" to camouflage her own subjectivity and thus potentially increase her authority. Student-teacher relationships are also discussed by the Chinese teachers in Finland. Several teachers expressed frustrations about their relationships with Finnish students outside the classroom. Finnish student-teacher relationships were more distant compared to what they had experienced in China. In their discourses, the student-teacher relationships were discussed in relation to the Finnish students' characteristics and "their culture"—a typical argument in interculturality in the case of misunderstanding, non-understanding and/or when one lacks a system of explanation (Dervin & Machart, 2015; Piller, 2010). Finnish students and culture were seen as an obstacle to forming close student-teacher relationships. However, from a critical intercultural perspective, these are over-generalizations. The teachers' beliefs and expectations about the kind of student-teacher relationships they would experience with the students might have been influenced by their previous experiences under different education norms. However, this can also reflect Baumeister and Leary's belongingness hypothesis that "human beings are fundamentally and pervasively motivated by a need to belong, that is, by a strong desire to form and maintain enduring interpersonal attachments" (1995, p. 522). Previous studies on the experiences of Finland-based Chinese teachers of Chinese language 468 Haiqin LIU, Fred DERVIN, Huiling XU, Robyn MOLONEY show that they (especially part-time and volunteer teachers) generally felt a lack of sense of belonging (Liu & Dervin, 2016). This may be the reason why building friendly student-teacher relationships was an important topic in their discourses. Our analysis of the teachers' discourses about learners reflects

the tendency of the teachers to take an essentialist view towards their learners (e.g., Abdallah-Pretceille, 2012). The Finnish students were reduced to a homogeneous group representing Finnish characteristics such as shyness and quietness (which are auto- and hetero-stereotypes). In addition, they were ignorant about what the teachers believed to be the 'real China' and felt disconnected from the language and culture, and they were less enthusiastic to socialize with the teachers outside the classroom. These characteristics were treated as challenges and obstacles limiting the teachers' choice of teaching methods. Viewing the learners in this way may have a negative impact on the teaching and learning of Chinese. In comparison, the teachers constructed imagined images of Australian students as active and outgoing. The Chinese immigrant teachers' discourses do reveal that some of them have an essentialist view of their learners. On the other hand, they also show that some of them prefer active learners and a friendly teacher-student relationship to obedient students and a hierarchical teacher-student relationship. This seems to challenge the findings about Chinese immigrant teachers in some of the existing studies mentioned in the review above. Australia Has a Better Learning Environment When comparing the two teaching environments, the teachers believed that Australia provided a better learning environment for Chinese language teaching. The comparative discourses focus mainly on three aspects: the different learning needs, learning environments, and the competition between Chinese and other foreign languages. Excerpt 3 "They Have It Better There" 469 Then the second thing we discussed was learning needs. This is what we discussed: It is a problem of the larger environment. Say, for example, from a more general picture, economic development, the intensity of economic and cultural exchanges with China. Our assumption is that in Australia, the need to learn Chinese is definitely greater than that in Finland. So, in the larger environment in Australia, the number of Chinese learners is surely bigger than in Finland. In Finland, we asked our students different questions like: Why do you learn Chinese? It is always "interest." There is no such answer as "I am going to work in a Chinese company," or "I am going to an environment where I have to use Chinese, that is why I learn"… so their learning needs are different. This has led to the whole situation—the numbers of learners are different in the two countries. The learner population affects the scale of Chinese language education in this country. So this is an obvious difference. (T1) In this excerpt, the discourses relate to learning needs. The teachers in this group believed that due to the numerous cultural and economic exchanges between Australia and China, there is a stronger need to learn Chinese in Australia. They placed Finland in a disadvantaged position, in terms of providing jobs where people can use the Chinese language. In contrast, Australia was believed to be in an advantageous position because of the more frequent cultural and economic exchanges leading to more job opportunities for people who speak Chinese. In the excerpt, the strategy of using the students' voices is present. What is also noteworthy is that the teacher re-enacts an imagined dialogue between her colleagues and students to support her line of argumentation (see e.g., Gillespie & Cornish, 2010). In fact, only one direct discourse is represented (Johansson, 2002) through the word "interest," while the rest of the represented discourses are non-uttered responses ("there is no such answer as …"). It is important to note at this stage that no direct voice from Australia is used to justify the teachers' opinions and analyses of the situation in Australia and Finland. In their discussion about the learning environments, some teachers used the word vacuum (真空) to describe the Finnish context. They complained about the lack of a platform to present Chinese culture, very limited learning materials, and few native Chinese speakers to practice 470 Haiqin LIU, Fred DERVIN, Huiling XU, Robyn MOLONEY the Chinese language in Finland. On the other hand, the situation in Australia was believed to be a utopia for Chinese language teaching and learning. Excerpt 4 Second is the learning environment. We feel that in Finland [Chinese] is learned in a vacuum. The students spend two hours in a Chinese classroom to learn the words and grammar, then they may not have any other opportunities to practice their Chinese. (T2, authors' emphasis) Excerpt 5 … there is hardly any platform in Finnish society, media … or the whole contemporary culture that can present Chinese language. They don't seem to care about China … don't care much. Then XX [the name of a fellow teacher in the same group] mentioned that if we want to find some materials, it is very difficult in either the library or any place in Finland. But if you

are in Australia, there are so many Chinese, be they immigrants or Australian-born Chinese. There are many chances to practice and plenty more Chinese teaching materials available. So these are the differences we discussed. (T2) The contrast between Australia and Finland seems to rely on very strong pre-existing beliefs of the teachers. Although in Excerpt 4, modalities do modify the potential strength of the assertions about the Finnish context, Excerpt 5 is constructed almost exclusively with self-assured assertions, especially when they talk about Australia (use of the present tense, which marks certainty, Johansson & Suomela-Salmi, 2011). Besides the lack of resources for teaching and learning, the teachers also mention that the Chinese language faces competition from other foreign languages in Finland. This teacher wonders if it is the same situation in Australia. Excerpt 6 "They Have It Better There" 471 I think in my institution there is competition because in our research centre there are three languages: Japanese, Korean and Chinese. I discovered that Finnish students, the local students, they like Japanese and Korean very much. They are perhaps fans of Korean culture or something. They are surprised if someone says they do not know Korean. Chinese… supposedly learners of our Chinese—China being such a great country (泱泱大国)—should outnumber those of them. But that is not the case, which puzzled me a lot. I was wondering if in Australia Chinese teaching also faces such competition in an environment where it has to compete with other languages. (T1) In this excerpt, the teacher talks about the position of the Chinese language among Asian languages in her research centre at a Finnish university. The Chinese language seems to be in a less favourable position among the students. What is interesting is what the teacher says about the popularity of the Chinese language with the students: She is puzzled because, as the language of a 'great country' (yangyang daguo 泱泱大国 in Chinese, implying that China is geographically large and economically and politically strong) Chinese is not the most popular language among the Asian languages. This view towards the languages reflects, on the one hand, the influence of the circulating discourses about political, economic, cultural and linguistic ideologies towards Chinese language, and on the other, the ethnocentric image of the Chinese language the teacher constructs. Reflection: "There Is No Paradise, but We Face More Problems" Our analysis of the teachers' discussion after viewing the video along with the interaction during the plenary talk shows that viewing the video did lead to a certain level of reflection. Some of the teachers realized that teachers of Chinese in Australia faced similar challenges as they did in Finland. For example, they noted similarities in how to attract students, low student retention rates, and funding cuts in education which are the main challenges the Chinese language teachers face in Finland. However, despite these reflections, the teachers often held to what 472 Haiqin LIU, Fred DERVIN, Huiling XU, Robyn MOLONEY they believed to be the truth about the two situations, even though some of these beliefs contradicted what they had seen in the video. Many of the discourses in the teachers' discussions after viewing the video still centred on learner characteristics and stronger economic ties with China for Australia, as well as justifying their belief that the country provides a much better environment for Chinese language education than Finland. In other words, even though they realized that Australia may not be a paradise for the learning and teaching of Chinese, they still believed that Chinese teachers in Finland faced more challenges. The teachers' strong position on these beliefs seemed prevalent and set. In the following excerpt, teacher T4 emphasizes that what was discussed in the video regarding using interactive activities in Australian Chinese classrooms was "exactly" the same as her expectation. She then explained the two reasons why it was not possible to have many interactive activities in the classroom: the small number of learners and Finnish students' characteristics. Here "Finns' characteristics" are again used as an obstacle to adopting interactive teaching. Excerpt 7 T4: I think this video is exactly the same as I expected: That is what the teaching and learning environment is like in Australia, like students' needs, learning motivations, and what they mentioned about having more activities in class. But I think … but in Finland the problem is actually firstly our learners, we have really a small number of learners in primary and lower secondary schools. T1: What [kind of students] do you teach? Do you teach here [in this university]? T4: Yeah. University students. And then the Finns' characteristics … actually they often do not like many activities. In the video, the Australia-based Chinese language teachers mentioned that the active promotion of Chinese

language education by the government had resulted in an increased number of learners. However, they also mentioned that they face the challenge of low student retention rates. One of the Australia-based teachers said that “They Have It Better There” 473 teachers of Chinese have to “sell themselves to the students (meaning work hard to promote the courses),” so that there would be enough learners for them to keep their full-time jobs. This leads to the Finland-based teachers’ discussion about the relationship between language education and bilateral relations: Excerpt 8 T5: This might be wrong! But I was thinking, China, er, Japan and South Korea have the upper hand (占了上风) … I was thinking … T10: I think this is really nothing. T5: Nothing … well it is nothing…. T10: From an international perspective, we are … just a small particle to them. T8: But Finland and Japan are really very friendly to each other… actually I think language to a large extent is …. T10: To learn the culture…. T8: Well … the bilateral relationship. It is true! T5: Yes, yes, yes! T8: Why do you think Chinese teaching is so well developed in Australia and New Zealand? It is true! Chinese is one of the subjects in the matriculation exam in New Zealand. How can it not be well? It should be better even if the teachers do not teach it seriously! Researcher 1: China is the second biggest trade partner of Australia, maybe that is … but isn’t China a very important trade partner of Finland now? T6: But it seems that no policy has been made … T8: We don’t really see it … T5: But I don’t feel that it is related to us, at least no specific policy is made for us. Like I personally experienced what the male teacher said! Didn’t he say that if you want to have a full-time job, you have to sell yourself, because if he does not try to attract the students’ interest, the students … he teaches less so earns less! This is very practical! In this excerpt, the teachers discussed why Chinese languages education is in a less favourable position in Finland. One teacher believed China is only “a small particle” (一个小分子) to Finland, while in 474 Haiqin LIU, Fred DERVIN, Huiling XU, Robyn MOLONEY New Zealand, Chinese teaching “should be better even if the teachers do not teach it seriously.” Economic ties between Australia and China were used as an argument that Australia has a great need for the Chinese language, but when reminded that Finland and China are also close trade partners, the teachers brushed this aside as irrelevant to them. T5 mentioned that he “personally experienced” the challenges in recruiting learners that one of the Australia-based teacher talked about. However, this did not lead the teachers to recognize that teachers in both countries shared similar challenges. Instead it was used as a later argument for the position that Finland-based Chinese teachers face more challenges. We could not help but wonder: Did the Chinese teachers in Finland really listen to their Australian counterparts? Or did they just use/manipulate the discourses of their Australian counterparts as a way of complaining about their conditions in Finland? As mentioned in the context description section, many of the Chinese immigrant teachers in Finland have not been professionally trained for the job, and there are no teacher education programmes they can study to become qualified teachers in the country. In addition, most of these teachers are part-time teachers. Their income depends on the available teaching hours which are influenced by the funding allocated for foreign language teaching in the school where they work and the learners they can recruit (see Liu & Dervin, 2016). In the following excerpts, T11 discussed this lack of professional development training, and T13 points out the gate-keeping practice in qualification recognition for migrant teachers of Chinese. Excerpt 9 T11: … for me as a school teacher, I had never… except for this one … so this is a very important training for me. So I had never had any other training in Chinese teaching. Because for the teacher professional development, it is very important that they can often receive training of different kinds. Because teachers one day can be dried up. … Excerpt 10 “They Have It Better There” 475 T13: … But if they wouldn’t recognize the qualification, it [refers to the PD training] wouldn't help us actually, because our salary will remain at an unqualified level … So even if we spend a year with you and got some kind of qualification, it wouldn’t help us. So that is the big challenge. As exemplified by the above two excerpts, the longing for job stability and security had led the teachers to construct Australia as a better place, a “utopia,” and Finland as a much less favourable place, a “dystopia,” for teachers of Chinese language. Discussion and Conclusion In this article, taking a critical intercultural perspective and discursive pragmatic approach, we examined Chinese immigrant teachers’ cross-national comparative discourses on being teachers of the Chinese language in

two national contexts. We examined the ways in which the Finland-based Chinese immigrant teachers talked about and made comparisons of the position of Chinese teachers in Finland and Australia, and revealed and discussed the beliefs, ideologies and imaginaries embedded in their discourses. Our analysis shows that the Chinese immigrant teachers in Finland tend to have negative views about being teachers of Chinese in Finland while idealizing teaching Chinese in Australia. Before viewing the stimulus video, the Finland-based Chinese immigrant teachers, drawing on circulating discourses but also imaginaries, anticipated that the discussion of their Australian counterparts would confirm their beliefs of Australia as being a better place to be teachers of Chinese language, in terms of learner characteristics, and cultural and economic ties with China. After viewing the video, some of these teachers realized that despite the differences in the history and the scale of Chinese language education in the two countries, the teachers in both places face very similar challenges, such as how to motivate learners' enthusiasm in learning the language, and funding cuts. However, many teachers still held a strong belief that Chinese language and teachers of Chinese 476 Haiqin LIU, Fred DERVIN, Huiling XU, Robyn MOLONEY language were in a less favourable position in Finland than in Australia, even though what they learned from the video often contradicted these beliefs. Taking a critical and reflective approach enables us to identify some of the essentialist discourses of the Chinese immigrant teachers. When they made comparisons about learners and contexts, they often relied on stereotypes and over generalizations. When comparing learners in Finland and Australia, culture and characteristics were often considered to be static and unchanged. Finnish students were often described as shy, quiet and inactive in the classroom, and as preferring to maintain a distance from the teachers outside the classroom, which are typical stereotypes about Finns (Dervin, 2015). At the same time, the teachers often imagined that the Australian students were out-going and active. Although learner characteristics were not discussed in the video, the previous essentialist discourses about the learners continue in the Finland-based Chinese language teachers' discussion after viewing the video. The Finnish learners' culture and characteristics were considered obstacles to interactive teaching, thus making teaching more challenging. This shows that the teachers are not equipped with the tools and skills needed to both question the stereotypical discourses surrounding national culture and identity and see the diversity within their learner groups. This might be due to the fact that many of these teachers are not professionally trained to be teachers of Chinese as a second language. Therefore, there is a need for further systematic PD training for the teachers to help them examine critically their beliefs, imaginaries and ideologies about different teaching environments. Drawing on the discursive pragmatic approach allows us to reflect on the power positions and the discursive situation co-created by all those present, and how this co-constructed context might have influenced how our participant teachers constructed their discourses. Both before and after viewing the video, the participant teachers' discourses focused mostly on their own problems. It is clear that many of these teachers perceived being a Chinese immigrant teacher in Finland to be an unfavourable position, and they took the PD training workshop as an opportunity to voice their concerns, needs and hopes. We, as "They Have It Better There" 477 researchers and teacher educators, and the staff of the Confucius Institute as the training organizer, might have been perceived as people in position of power to change the current situation of Chinese language education in Finland. Peer Chinese immigrant teachers might have been perceived and expected to be one of us—the Chinese immigrant teacher community—who could support each other, and form a stronger voice together. As exemplified in the analysis, various factors have contributed to the Chinese immigrant teachers' construction of comparisons about Chinese language education in Finland and in Australia. The teachers' perception of the status of the Chinese language in the two contexts seem to have had the greatest impact on their cross-national comparative discourses. The Chinese immigrant teachers' perceptions that they are somewhat marginalized in Finnish education (Liu & Dervin, 2016) might also play an important role in determining their negative discourses about Finland and their idealizations of another country where they imagine immigrant Chinese teachers are more valued and face fewer challenges. Our findings point to the importance of providing space to discuss these imaginaries and confront teachers, be they immigrant or

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